

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY BERN UNN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS UNN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN UNN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI UNN

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AMEMBASSY MADRID UNN

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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA UNN

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK UNN

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM UNN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE UNN

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA UNN

AMEMBASSY VIENNA UNN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 10648

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, IT

SUBJECT: CISL MINORITY PLANS TO FORM NEW LABOR FEDERATION

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REF: ROME'S 10330 (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE CISL MINORITY IS LAYING FIRM PLANS TO BREAK AWAY FROM THE PARENT ORGANIZATION AND FORM A NEW ANTI-COMMUNIST FEDERATION WITHIN THE NEXT COUPLE OF MONTHS. MINORITY LEADERS FEEL THAT CISL HAS BEEN LED TO THE POINT OF NO RETURN BY THE PRO-LABOR UNITY POLICIES OF THE MAJORITY. THEY FEEL THEY MUST MAKE A BREAK NOW OR RUN THE RISK OF SEEING THE ENTIRE ITALIAN LABOR MOVEMENT DELIVERED INTO THE HANDS OF THE COMMUNISTS. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT, WHILE THESE PLANS ENJOY THE GENERAL SUPPORT OF SOME LEADING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC ELEMENTS, THERE HAS BEEN NO CLOSE COORDINATION WITH THE DC. NOR CAN IT BE SAID AT PRESENT THAT THE DC IS GIVING STRONG BACKING TO THE PLAN. THE NEW FEDERATION, IF FORMED, WILL FACE MANY OBSTACLES, NOT LEAST THE ABSENCE OF TRULY INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT BEHOOVES THE USG NOT TO BECOME PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED WITH THE SCHISMATIC GROUP, BOTH BECAUSE SUCH INVOLVMENT WOULD BE SEIZED UPON BY UNFRIENDLY ELEMENTS TO DISCREDIT THE CISL MINORITY, AND BECAUSE WE MUST RETAIN OUR OPTIONS WITH ALL DEMOCRATIC ELEMENTS OF THE ITALIAN LABOR MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. THE CISL MINORITY IS PLANNING TO SPLIT FROM CISL IN SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER AND FORM A NEW LABOR FEDERATION. WE HAVE BECOME CONVINCED OF THIS FOLLOWING CONVERSATIONS IN RECENT DAYS WITH A SERIES OF LEADING FIGURES IN THE CISL MINORITY--SARTORI (AGRICULTURAL WORKERS), SIRONI (ELECTRICAL), BORRINI (MCL - CHRISTIAN WORKERS MOVEMENT), PROFS. ROMANI AND SABA (CISL IDEOLOGUES), CONSTANTINI (PENSIONERS), TACCONI (CISL SECRETARIAT) -- AND WITH CISL SECRETARY GENERAL STORTI. THE BREAK IS SLATED TO COME SIMULTANEOUS WITH THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CALLED BY THE FEDERATION CGIL-CISL-UIL (CCU).

3. TO DATE, THERE IS NO COMPELLING EVIDENCE THAT THIS MOVE HAS BEEN FULLY STAFFED OUT BEYOND THE RESOLVE TO ACT SOON. COORDINATION WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY SEEMS SPOTTY AND, THOUGH SUPPORT FROM SOME ELEMENTS OF UIL IS EXPECTED, THIS EXPECTATION SEEMS BASED MORE ON HOPE THAN ON PROMISE.

4. IRVING BROWN, PARIS-BASED AFL-CIO REP, AND HOWARD MOLISANI, HEAD OF NY ITALIAN-AMERICAN LABOR COUNCIL, VISITED ROME LAST

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WEEK AND SAW DC PARTY SECRETARY FANFANI AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF CISL MINORITY FIGURES. THEY REPORTED THAT FANFANI IS IN FAVOR OF THE MINORITY'S PLANS TO SECEDE, AND WE HAVE OTHER EVIDENCE THAT THIS IS THE CASE. FANFANI ALSO COMMENTED FAVORABLY ABOUT MINORITY LEADER VITO SCALIA. BOTH MOLISANI AND BROWN SEEM STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF THE MORITY'S PLANS, THOUGH NOT TO THE POINT OF MAJOR FINANCING. MOLISANI'S VISIT IN PARTICULAR HAS STIRRED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST. STORTI IS CONSIDERABLY UPSET THAT

MOLISANI CAME TO ROME, "SAW EVERYBODY IN THE OPPOSITION AND A NUMBER OF POLITICAL LEADERS," AND DIDN'T CALL ON STORTI. ACCORDING TO STORTI, THE CISL MINORITY IS USING MOLISANI'S VISIT TO INDICATE, IN ITS SECESSION PLANS, THAT IT HAS THE SUPPORT AND SPONSORSHIP OF THE AFL-CIO.

5. THE CISL MINORITY IS PLAGUED BY PROBLEMS OF LEADERSHIP AND MONEY. THERE SEEMS TO BE A CONSENSUS THAT SCALIA IS NOT THE BEST, MOST CREDIBLE LEADER TO HAVE IN THIS SITUATION. NEVERTHELESS, TIME IS SHORT AND HE HAS NO LOGICAL RIVALS. THE SECESSION, IF IT OCCURS, WILL BE LED BY HIM. FOR MONTHS, MONEY HAS BEEN EMPHASIZED TO US BY MINORITY FIGURES AS A VITAL REQUIREMENT FOR THEIR PLANS. ROMANI AND SABA CLAIM THAT MONEY IS NOT REALLY A PROBLEM, WHAT WITH THE FULL TREASURIES OF THE SECEDING UNIONS PLUS THE CHECKOFF SYSTEM. NEVERTHELESS, MONEY DOES SEEM TO BE A GREAT PROBLEM, BECAUSE SO MUCH OF IT WILL BE NEEDED (UP TO A MILLION DOLLARS FOR OPENERS). IT IS NOT CLEAR WHERE IT WILL COME FROM, THOUGH BASED ON THEIR TESTIMONY TO US, MOLISANI AND BROWN WILL NOT BE THE SOURCE BEYOND, SAY, \$50,000 OR SO AS "SEED MONEY."

6. MINORITY MEMBERS TALKS OF ATTRACTING 800,000 MEMBERS AT THE OUTSET, WITH PROSPECTS FOR DOUBLING THAT NUMBER IN A YEAR OR TWO. THIS NUMBER SEEMS INFLATED. EVEN IF ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE UNIONS BEING COUNTED ON TO SECEDE WERE TO FOLLOW THEIR LEADERS, THEY WOULD COME UP SHORT. UIL DEFECTIONS WILL APPARENTLY NOT COME FOR SOME TIME, IF AT ALL: SYMPATHETIC UIL OFFICIALS, SUCH AS ROSSI AND RAVECCA, STILL HOPE TO TURN UIL CHIEF VANNI AWAY FROM HIS UNITY-BENT COURSE. GREAT HOPES SEEM TO BE BASED ON ATTRACTING THE ADHESION OF INDEPENDENT UNIONS. HOWEVER, THE INDEPENDENTS COULD HAVE JOINED A FEDERATION LONG SINCE IF THEY WERE DISPOSED.

7. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS NOT UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT SOME
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SUPPORT FROM UNIONS NOT LED BY CISL MINORITY FIGURES. THERE IS, FOR EXAMPLE, A STRONG MINORITY ORGANIZATION IN THE GENOA AREA HEADED BY LASTREGO. SIMILAR UNITS, LESS WELL ORGANIZED, CAN BE FOUND ELSEWHERE. IN RECENT MONTHS, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS HAVE BEGUN FORMING UNITS AT WORKPLACES, UNDER THE ACRONYM OF GIP (GRUPPI DI IMPEGNO POLITICO -- POLITICAL COMMITMENT GROUPS), TO COMBAT COMMUNIST ORGANIZATIONS AT THE INDUSTRIAL GRASS ROOTS. THOSE INVOLVED WITH GIP TELL US THEY HAVE BEEN GETTING A MOST HEARTENING RESPONSE.

8. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, 800,000 MEMBERS SEEMS OVERLY OPTIMISTIC TO US.

FURTHERMORE, AS FANFANI HAS ALSO NOTED TO US, THERE WILL BE A NOTABLE ABSENCE OF SUPPORT IN THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, WITH SARTORI'S AGRICULTURAL WORKERS MAKING UP THE LION'S SHARE OF THE NEW

FEDERATION'S MEMBERSHIP. MINORITY MEMBERS ARE GENERALLY AWARE OF ALL OF THIS, BUT ARE EVIDENTLY BENT UPON SCHISM REGARDLESS. WHY? THE RECURRING ANSWER IS THAT THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE. STORTI IS UNRECOUPABLE, THEY SAY, THE CISL IS SPEEDING INTO THE ARMS OF THE COMMUNISTS. UNLESS STEPS ARE TAKEN AT ONCE, IT WILL BE TOO LATE TO SALVAGE ANYTHING. THE FACT IS THAT THE FORTUNES OF THE CISL MINORITY ARE DIMINISHING NOTICEABLY AND SOME OF THE LEADING FIGURES ARE EXPERIENCING INTERNAL PROBLEMS IN THEIR UNIONS. IN ADDITION, STORTI HAS TOLD US THAT RECENTLY THE POSTAL WORKERS AND TEACHERS, UPON WHOM THE CISL MINORITY IS BANKING, HAVE TURNED THEIR BACKS ON THE MINORITY. OUR INQUIRIES SEEM TO CONFIRM THIS FACT.

9. IF SARTORI, SIRONI, LEOLINI, IANNONE AND OTHERS CAN HOLD ON TO THEIR MEMBERS, IF THERE ARE NO FURTHER DEFECTIONS, AND IF THE INDEPENDENTS CAN BE INDUCED TO SURRENDER THEIR INDEPENDENCE, AND IF, ABOVE ALL, THE DC GIVES THE BREAKAWAY GROUP STRONG SUPPORT, A SIGNIFICANT, VIABLE ORGANIZATION COULD BE FORMED. THOSE ARE SIGNIFICANT IFS, AND THIS DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE COUNTER-MEASURES WHICH CAN BE EXPECTED FROM THE CCU. NO DOUBT, THE NEW GROUP WILL BE DENOUNCED AS SCHISMATICS, AS YELLOW UNIONISTS, AS LACKEYS OF REACTION AND/OR THE UNITED STATES. OFFERING ANTI-COMMUNISM PLUS APPEALS FOR WORKER MODERATION AND LABOR PEACE, THE CISL MINORITY IS A MADE-TO-ORDER TARGET FOR BROAD ELEMENTS OF THE ITALIAN LABOR SCENE.

10. IN THIS SITUATION, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE US GOVERNMENT
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MUST PUBLICLY MAINTAIN A POSTURE OF NON-INVOLVEMENT AND NON-ALIGNMENT. OTHERWISE, IF UNFRIENDLY ELEMENTS CAN EFFECTIVELY SMEAR THE CISL MINORITY AS INSTRUMENTS OF US POLICY, THEIR CHANCES FOR SUCCESS, ALREADY MODEST, WILL VANISH AND THE US INTEREST IN MASIMIZING THE STRENGTH OF FREE TRADE UNIONISM IN ITALY COULD BE BADLY DAMAGED.VOLPE

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